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ejecting the pledget adjacent the puncture in the wall of the blood vessel to facilitate hemostasis.

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1 Aug 25 26. (New) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a
2 blood vessel according to Claim 25, wherein the step of loading the introducer involves
3 hydrating and loading the pledget into the introducer.

1 27. (New) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a
2 blood vessel according to Claim 25, wherein the step of loading the introducer involves
3 compressing and loading the pledget into the introducer.

1 28. (New) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a
2 blood vessel according to Claim 25, wherein the step of loading the introducer over the
3 guidewire involves piercing the pledget with the guidewire.

1 29. (New) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a
2 blood vessel according to Claim 25, further comprising a step of establishing a depth of the
3 puncture in the wall of the blood vessel.

1 30. (New) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a
2 blood vessel according to Claim 29, wherein the step of establishing a depth of a puncture

3 is performed by introducing a tract dilator into a tissue tract until a distal end of the tract
4 dilator abuts an exterior of the blood vessel wall.

31. (New) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a
blood vessel according to Claim 29, wherein the step of establishing a depth of a puncture
is performed by introducing the introducer over the guidewire and into a tissue tract until a
distal end of the introducer abuts an exterior wall of the blood vessel.

32. (New) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a
blood vessel according to Claim 25, wherein the ejected pledget is positioned against an
outer wall of the blood vessel.

33. (New) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a
blood vessel according to Claim 25, wherein the ejected pledget expands upon delivery to
fill the available space and provide localized compression.

34. (New) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a
blood vessel according to Claim 26, wherein the ejected pledget expands more quickly
when wetted than a pledget of dry sponge material.

35. (New) A method for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel, the method comprising:

loading an introducer with a ~~pledget~~ of sponge;

loading the introducer over a guidewire positioned in the blood vessel by inserting the guidewire through the loaded pledget; and

advancing the introducer through the skin and subcutaneous tissue overlying the puncture in the wall of the blood vessel.

36. (New) The method for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to Claim 35, wherein the step of loading the introducer involves hydrating and loading the pledget into the introducer.

37. (New) The method for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to Claim 35, wherein the step of loading the introducer involves compressing and loading the pledget into the introducer.

38. (New) The method for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to Claim

3 35, wherein the step of loading the introducer over the guidewire involves piercing the
pledget with the guidewire.

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3 39. (New) The method for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and
4 subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to Claim
35, further comprising a step of establishing a depth of the puncture in the wall of the blood
vessel.

1 40. (New) The method for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and
2 subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to Claim
3 39, wherein the step of establishing a depth of the puncture is performed by introducing a
4 tract dilator into the subcutaneous tissue until a distal end of the tract dilator abuts an
5 exterior of the blood vessel wall.

1 41. (New) The method for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and
2 subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to Claim
3 39, wherein the step of establishing a depth of the puncture is performed by introducing the
4 introducer over the guidewire and into the subcutaneous tissue until a distal end of the
5 introducer abuts an exterior wall of the blood vessel.

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42. (New) A device for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel, the device comprising:

an introducer for hydrating a sponge pledget for delivery into a patient to seal the puncture, the introducer including a staging chamber with a first diameter configured to receive the sponge pledget, a delivery chamber with a second diameter smaller than the first diameter, and a tapered section between the staging chamber and the delivery chamber for compressing the pledget;

a plunger insertable into the introducer for ejection of the pledget from the delivery chamber into a patient to seal the puncture in the blood vessel wall.

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43. (New) A device for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel, the device comprising:

an introducer for compressing a sponge pledget for delivery into a patient to seal the puncture, the introducer including a staging chamber with a first diameter configured to receive the sponge pledget, a delivery chamber with a second diameter smaller than the first diameter, and a tapered section between the staging chamber and the delivery chamber for compressing the pledget;

a plunger insertable into the introducer for ejection of the pledget from the delivery chamber into a patient to seal the puncture in the blood vessel wall.

1 44. (New) The device according to Claim 43, wherein the plunger includes a
2 through bore for threading a guidewire through the plunger to accurately place the sponge
3 pledget at an exterior of the puncture in the blood vessel.

cl. 1 45. (New) The device according to Claim 43, wherein the staging chamber has a
cont. 2 substantially constant diameter and the delivery chamber has a substantially constant
3 diameter.

1 46. (New) The device according to Claim 43, wherein the staging chamber has a
2 length shorter than a length of the delivery chamber.

1 47. (New) The device according to Claim 43, wherein a proximal end of the
2 introducer has a fitting for connection to a syringe for hydration of the pledget.

1 48. (New) The device according to Claim 43, wherein a distal end of the
2 introducer has a smooth rounded outer surface for insertion into tissue of the patient which
3 is configured to resist entering the puncture.

1 49. (New) The device according to Claim 43, further comprising a depth
2 indicating member positioned on an exterior of the introducer and movable longitudinally
3 with respect to the introducer.

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1 50. (New) The device according to Claim 43, further comprising a kneading
2 feature within a lumen of the introducer for compressing, expanding, or changing a shape
3 of the sponge pledget passing through the lumen.

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1 51. (New) The device according to Claim 43, wherein the kneading feature is at
2 least one enlarged diameter section of the lumen.

1 52. (New) A device for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and
2 subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel, the device
3 comprising:
4 an introducer for hydrating a sponge pledget for delivery into a patient to
5 seal the puncture, the introducer including a staging chamber with a first diameter
6 configured to receive the sponge pledget, a delivery chamber with a second diameter
7 smaller than the first diameter, and a tapered section between the staging chamber and the
8 delivery chamber for compressing the pledget;
9 a plunger insertable into the introducer for ejection of the pledget from the
10 delivery chamber into a patient to seal the puncture in the blood vessel wall.

1 53. (New) The device according to Claim 52, wherein the plunger includes a
2 through bore for threading a guidewire through the plunger to accurately place the sponge
3 pledget at an exterior of the puncture in the blood vessel.

1 54. (New) The device according to Claim 52, wherein the staging chamber has a
2 substantially constant diameter and the delivery chamber has a substantially constant
3 diameter.

1 55. (New) The device according to Claim 52, wherein the staging chamber has a
2 length shorter than a length of the delivery chamber.

1 56. (New) The device according to Claim 52, wherein a proximal end of the
2 introducer has a fitting for connection to a syringe for hydration of the pledget.

1 57. (New) The device according to Claim 52, wherein a distal end of the
2 introducer has a smooth rounded outer surface for insertion into tissue of the patient which
3 is configured to resist entering the puncture.

1 58. (New) The device according to Claim 52, further comprising a depth
2 indicating member positioned on an exterior of the introducer and movable longitudinally
3 with respect to the introducer.

1 59. (New) The device according to Claim 52, further comprising a kneading
2 feature within a lumen of the introducer for compressing, expanding, or changing a shape
3 of the sponge pledget passing through the lumen.

60. (New) The device according to Claim 52, wherein the kneading feature is at
least one enlarged diameter section of the lumen.